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Astronomer Says Mystery Photo By Quincy Man Alters UFO Ideas

CAMBRIDGE — A top New England astronomer said yesterday the photograph taken several weeks ago by a Patriot Ledger Staff Reporter "comes very close to scientific evidence about UFO's."

The astronomer was Dr. Gerald S. Hawkins, director of the Boston University Observatory and staff astronomer at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and the Harvard College Observatory.

Dr. Hawkins said the color slide, which shows a red-orange object maneuvering in rectangular patterns over Wollaston, "is forcing astronomers to think and think hard for the very first time about these UFO's."

He based his comments, he said, on a preliminary analysis of the photograph printed in the July 6 issue of The Patriot Ledger. He said he would analyze the original slide before making any final opinions, however.

Dr. Hawkins said he, like most astronomers, "is forced to discount almost all the visual sightings of these UFO's.

"But a picture with this detail comes very close to scientific evidence."

He also said the photograph taken by Staff Reporter Richard Pothier would probably go on the record books as "The Quincy Incident."